

CHRISTOPHER G. BROWN

BACCHYLIDES 17.86–90

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 82 (1990) 32–34

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

BACCHYLIDES 17.86-90

τάφεν δὲ Διὸς υἱὸς ἔνδοθεν
 κέαρ, κέλευσέ τε ΚΑΤΟΥ-
 ΠΟΝ ἴχεν εὐδαίδαλον
 νῆα· Μοῖρα δ' ἑτέραν ἐπόρουν ὁδόν·
 ἴετο δ' ὠκύπομπον δόρυ.

With one major exception, ΚΑΤΟΥΠΟΝ, the text is printed here as it appears in the standard edition of Snell and Maehler.¹ Interpretation of this passage is problematic. Is the correct text in line 87f. κατ' οὐρον (Kenyon and, apart from Festa, all subsequent editors) or κάτουρον (Housman)? Does Minos order the ship to hurry on its course or does he order it stopped? These questions are not trivial, for they affect how we understand Bacchylides' treatment of Minos. Scholars have generally been eager to see Minos in a very harsh light, and so have endorsed Kenyon's text and the reading of the passage that it necessitates. A notable exception is Giesekam, who has argued persuasively for a more favourable view of Minos in the poem.² He has supported Housman's text, but his argument is brief and can be supplemented in important ways. The issue hinges principally on two points, viz. the precise force of ἴχεν, and the form and meaning of what the papyrus transmits as ΚΑΤΟΥΠΟΝ. Also relevant is the significance of the ἑτέρα ὁδός of line 89.

On the usual view, κατ' οὐρον is read, and the Doric infinitive ἴχεν is understood as equivalent to ἔχειν (cf. Jebb ad loc.). The resulting text is translated "[Minos] gave command to keep the cunningly-wrought ship before the wind" (Jebb). Jebb cites, as examples of this alleged use of ἔχω for "steering a ship on a certain course," Od. 10.91, ἔνθ' οἷ γ' εἶπω πάντες ἔχον νέας ἀμφιελίccας, and Hdt. 6.95, ἐνθεῦτεν δὲ οὐ παρὰ τὴν ἡπειρον εἶχον τὰς νέας ἰθὺ τοῦ τε Ἑλλησπόντου καὶ τῆς Θρηίκης. Of these only the second instance is relevant (though it is a more generalized reference than the passage under discussion); in the Homeric passage ἔχον is used of bringing ships to anchor (in fact, Privitera translates it in Heubeck's text by "arrestarono"). Consequently, there is no parallel for the proposed usage in early poetry. Moreover, the assumption that ἴχεν stands for ἔχειν in the sense required is dubious. In early texts meanings of ἴχω are almost always derived from the basic sense "hold back, restrain."³ Furthermore, this is its meaning elsewhere in

¹ B.Snell and H.Maehler, *Bacchylidis: Carmina cum Fragmentis* (Leipzig 1970). I have also printed Μοῖρα with a capital letter, acknowledging the presence of the anthropomorphic figure: cf. Aesch. Cho. 911, καὶ τόνδε τοῖνον Μοῖρ' ἐπόρουνεν μόρον.

² G.J.Giesekam, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* ed. F.Cairns 2 (1976) 237-252.

³ Cf. LSJ s.v.; G.C.Wakker, *LfggrE* s.v. ἴχω B, "aus (zurück)halten alle Verwendungen von ἴ. erklärbar."

Bacchylides.⁴ Accordingly, the basic meaning of the verb encourages a reading of the passage in which the ship is to be stopped.

κατ' οὐρον is an obvious way to understand ΚΑΤΟΥΡΟΝ, especially since the papyrus appears to preserve a circumflex over the diphthong, although it must be stressed that diacritical marks in papyrus texts are in no way decisive.⁵ If this text is read and ἴχεν is understood in its basic sense, it might be tempting to translate "he gave the order to stay the ship that was before the wind." But without clearer articulation in the Greek a quasi-adjectival usage of the prepositional phrase is highly unlikely. Moreover, κατ' οὐρον seems to occur in contexts in which motion is implied, and there is no example of a ship being stopped κατ' οὐρον.⁶ Consequently, if we print κατ' οὐρον, we shall be driven to understand ἴχεν as Jebb and most commentators do, however much this diverges from the normal semantic range of the verb.

Housman suggested another approach to the passage, arguing that κάτουρον, not κατ' οὐρον, is the correct reading, and translating "he ordered them to stop the ship, which was running before the wind."⁷ The adjective κάτουρος is elsewhere unattested,⁸ but the formation is exactly parallel to ἔπουρος. As his translation indicates, Housman believes that κάτουρος means "running before the wind." Jebb, however, objects: "But, even with κάτουρον, the sense would be, 'to keep the ship before the wind': κάτουρον could not stand for τὴν κατ' οὐρον πλέουσιν."⁹ It is clear that Jebb's position has been a decisive factor in banishing κάτουρον to the apparatus of later editions, but I would argue that Jebb is wrong. Just as ἔπουρος is related to ἐπουρώ/ἐπουρίζω, so κάτουρος stands in a close relation to κατουρώ/κατουρίζω. In each case the meaning of the adjective is determined by the semantic range of the verb. ἐπουρώ/ἐπουρίζω means "to blow onwards (i.e. favourably)" (cf. LSJ s.vv.), and so ἔπουρος is understood as "blowing

⁴ 5.24, οὐ νιν (sc. αἰετὸν) κορυφαὶ μεγάλας ἴχουσι γαίαι, / οὐδ' ἄλλος ἀκαμάτας / δυσπαίπαλα κύματα; 17.23, ἴχε μεγαλοῦχον ἦρος βίαν; cf. Gerber, *Lexicon* s.v.

⁵ On the use of accents in the London papyrus, see Jebb's edition, pp.135-137 (especially 137, for some examples of false accents); cf. H.Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* 1.1 (Leiden 1982) 36-41. For general discussion, see J.Moore-Blunt, *QUCC* 29 (1978) 137-163.

⁶ Cf. Aesch. Pers. 481, Th. 690, 854; Soph. Tr. 468; Eur. And. 554; Hdt. 4.163.10; Arr. An. 7.20.6.3; Luc. Tox. 7.6. Hutchinson (on Aesch. Th. 690) remarks: "κατ' οὐρον denotes impetuous speed."

⁷ A.E.Housman, *CR* 12 (1898) 139 = *Classical Papers* 2.462-463. This proposal won the support of a number of distinguished scholars in the years immediately following its publication: see Giesekam (above n.2) 250 n.28. Particularly noteworthy is the approval of Wilamowitz (cf. his *Bacchylides* [Berlin 1898] 28, where he translates, "zu halten / gebot er das Schiff unter dem Winde"), and P.Maas, *Die neuen Responsionsfreiheiten bei Bakchylides und Pindar* 2 (Berlin 1921) 10f. Among editors only Festa (Florence 1916) 106f., has adopted the text. More recently, Giesekam alone has supported Housman, but his arguments have not persuaded subsequent scholarship: the Teubner text is accepted without comment by A.P.Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 17, 20; G.Ieranò, *QS* 30 (1989) 175. R.Scodel, *Hermes* 112 (1984) 139 n.8, draws attention to the issue, but supports Jebb's objections to Housman's text.

⁸ As Giesekam (246) notes, this fact should trouble no one: a very large number of ἄπαξ λεγόμενα are attested in Bacchylides.

⁹ Jebb offered these same objections at greater length in *CR* 12 (1898) 154. Scodel (above n.7, 139 n.8) mistakenly supposes that Jebb objects to the syntax of Housman's proposal.

favourably" (cf. Soph. Tr. 954 with Kamerbeek's note; Clem. Alex. Paed. 1.7.54). The meaning of κάτουρος can be defined in the same way. The verbs mean "to sail before the wind" (cf. LSJ s.vv.); moreover, it has been overlooked that Eustathius glosses κατουρίζειν with τὸ κατ' οὐρον πλέειν (Comm. in Il. 4.661.15 van der Valk). κάτουρος, then, is not an adjective formed directly from the phrase κατ' οὐρον; consequently, Jebb was incorrect to say that the adjective could not mean τὴν κατ' οὐρον πλέουσαν, for that is precisely what it should mean.

In light of the preceding discussion, we can conclude that Housman's κάτουρον coheres perfectly with the normal usage of ἔχω: Minos orders the ship to be stopped. As Housman saw, κάτουρον picks up the opening passage of the poem (5-7):¹⁰

τηλαυγεί γὰρ [ἐν] φάρεϊ
βορήϊαι πίτνο[ν] αἶραι
κλυτᾶς ἕκατι π[ε]λεμαίγιδος Ἀθάν[α]

After Theseus dives into the sea, Minos orders his crew to check the ship that has hitherto been sailing before the wind, but the gods, whose will and influence are much in evidence in the poem,¹¹ do not allow it; the ship speeds on. In the face of the power of the gods the sea-lord of Cnossus is unable to stop his ship, for Moira has determined otherwise. On the usual reading of the passage, line 89 (Μοῖρα δ' ἑτέραν ἐπόρουν ὁδόν) has seemed ambiguous:¹² the ship is held to its course; the ἑτέρα ὁδός then must be metaphorical, referring to the course of events, not to the course of the ship. But as Housman noted, the context suggests a more literal meaning for ὁδός, and this suits his reading of the passage: the course of the ship is different from that commanded by Minos.

With Housman's text, the villainy of Minos is minimized. And this is surely correct. Bacchylides does not present a crude conflict between a hero and a villain, but rather a clash between two heroes.¹³ On this sort of reading, we have a subtler and more interesting poem. It is also salutary to remember in this regard that the conflict between Achilles and Hector in the Iliad is no simple polarization.¹⁴

University of Western Ontario

Christopher G.Brown

¹⁰ See J.Stern, RBPh 45 (1967) 40-47, for the careful balance between the opening and closing sections of the poem. Cf. more recently Ieranò (above n.7) 161.

¹¹ I discuss this more fully in "The Power of Aphrodite: Bacchylides 17.10," Mnemosyne (forthcoming).

¹² This is one of two examples of 'conscious ambiguity' in Bacchylides detected by R.F.Renehan, GRBS 10 (1969) 226. The other is Bacch. 16.30-35.

¹³ For a detailed exposition of this sort of view, see Gieseckam (above n.2), especially 243f., on the careful delineation of Minos' heroic stature in the poem.

¹⁴ I thank Professors R.L.Fowler, D.E.Gerber, and B.C.MacLachlan for commenting on this note in draft.